Level Meetings (SLM), held annually with the participation of representatives of MHA, MOD and the State Governments of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. In addition, Foreign Office consultations and Border Liaison Meeting (BLM) between the Area Commanders of the Army of the two countries are held regularly.

(c) Myanmar Army has carried out periodic combing operations against Indian Insurgent Groups trying to operate from Myanmar territory. Myanmar has repeatedly assured that it will not allow elements hostile to India to operate from its territory and will cooperte with India to ensure that the common border remains peaceful and prosperus.

USA's request for troops to Iraq

469. SHRI N.R. DASARI:
SHRI MURLI DEORA:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether USA has requested India for making available troops for Iraq;

(b) if so, the decision taken by Government thereon; and

(c) the Countries which are sending their troops to Iraq to stabilise post-war effect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes.

(b) The decision taken by Government of India on July 14, is as follows.

"The Government of India has given careful thought to the question of sending Indian troops to Iraq.

Our longer term national interest, our concern for the people of Iraq, our long-standing ties with the Gulf region as a whole, as well as our growing dialogue and strengthened ties with the U.S. have been key elements in this consideration.

India remains ready to respond to the urgent needs of the Iraqi people for stability, security, political progress and economic reconstruction. Were there be an explicit UN mandate for the purpose, the Government of India could consider the deployment of our troops in Iraq.

In the meanwhile, Government of India is ready to contribute to the restoration of infrastructure, medical, health, educational, communications and other civilian needs of the Iraqi people. As a concrete gesture of our support to the Iraqi people, we are already planning to set up, jointly with Jordan, a hospital in Najaf in Iraq."

(c) Some countries, mainly part of the Coalition have sent their troops to Iraq.

Bus service between Gangtok and Lhasa

470. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI N.R. DASARI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Sikkim has sent a proposal to start a bus service between Gangtok and Lhasa in view of the fact that border trade through Nathula Pass in Sikkim is proposed to be started; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

Sino-Indian rapprochement

471. DR. M.N. DAS:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russia has welcomed Sino-Indian rapprochement after the Prime Minister's visit to China;